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Pulpit Preaching

UME 10 MAY, 1957 NUMBER 5

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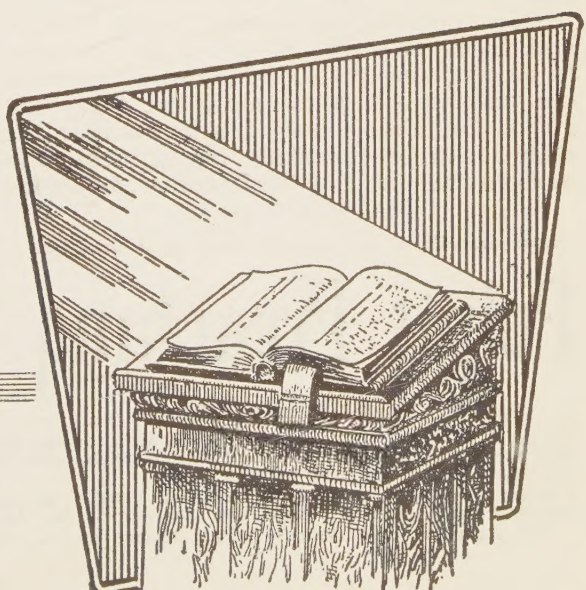

A PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL FOR MINISTERS

Editorial Comments

This month's themes are "On Top of Life" and "Christ in Life's Equation." Some months ago, following the printing of Dr. Fred E. Luchs' stimulating article, "Can Men Over Fifty Write Good Sermons?" we received a letter from Franklin C. Hubbard whose ordination came after that age. We invited him to share with *Pulpit Preaching* readers the inspiring testimony which he calls "The Glory Road."

Because of the warm commendations which followed the recent publication of Lowell M. Atkinson's "Sheaf of Pulpit Prayers," we asked him to prepare more for this issue.

Next month's topics will be "Searchlight on Self" and "Table of the Lord." The July themes will be "Persistence in Prayer" and "Disciplines of Stewardship."

—o—

Books For Pulpit Preaching

Christian Ethics by Dr. Georgia Harkness is a superb book, the kind we have long since become accustomed to expect from her gifted and creative mind. In this volume she presents with vivid clarity the wide range of Christian ethics in such a way as to offer the biblical foundations upon which decisions may be made. After defining the bases of biblical morality, the author relates these to the Christian's concern of self and society, marriage and family, economic life, race relations, the state, war and peace. (Abingdon, 240 pp., $3.75)

Theodore P. Ferris' *When I Became a Man* is an appeal for mature thinking on the part of Christian people. These twenty-five sermons, drawn from the author's pastoral ministry at Trinity Church, Boston, and from his radio ministry, do not need to be commended to *Pulpit Preaching* readers who already know his great mind and spirit. Dr. Ferris here illustrates how the Gospel can be forcefully communicated to modern men and how Christianity can enrich

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Worth Quoting

A father had told his son that he would send him to sleep in the attic, with only bread and water for his supper, if he broke the laws of the home once more. The child disobeyed again; the father sent him to the attic.

At suppertime the father could not eat. He had the boy on his mind and his heart. His wife said, "I know what you are thinking. But you must not bring the boy from the attic. It would cause him to disobey again. He would have no respect for your word. You must not cheapen your relation as his father by failing to keep your promise." To which her husband replied, "You are right. But he is so lonely up there." He kissed his wife good night, entered the attic, ate bread and water with the boy, and when the child went to sleep on the hard boards, his father's arm was his pillow.

C. Gordon Bayless, *And Be Ye Saved* (Revell)

* * * *

Dad himself was a firm believer in religion and insisted that we . . . attend church whenever we were near one. After his death Mother told me that in moments of crisis she often saw him kneeling in prayer in a hotel bedroom when they were traveling.

Will Rogers, Jr., *I Discover Dad*

* * * *

With that characteristic sense of duty that he was later to show so dramatically in public life, Dwight Eisenhower often subdued his own strongest feelings in order to let his son develop a sense of responsibility and direction about his own life. And yet, as he was also to do so successfully with subordinates in both the Army and government, Eisenhower almost always got his own way—often without directly asking for it, pleading for it or ordering it.

Flora Rheta Schreiber, *Ike and His Only Son*

* * * *

Through all the years that John was grow-

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Pulpit Preaching

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CHARLES F. JACOBS

CLARENCE J. FORSBERG

GENE E. BARTLETT

iving from Day to Day

CHARLES F. JACOBS, First Congregational Church, Waterloo, Iowa

This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.
Psalm 118:24.

Psalm 118 discloses an attitude toward e that all of us need: "This is the day hich the Lord has made; let us rejoice and glad in it." What it can mean to take this essage to heart was forcibly brought home me a few months ago when I read an ticle by the late Mrs. Hazel Andre, wife the dean of Agriculture at Iowa State llege. This gracious young mother had en stricken with an incurable disease just the time when her family needed her most. hile on the very frontier of death, she ote an article which the publisher en-led: "The Last Wonderful Days of Mrs. ndre." The message of courage and faith hich this noble woman expressed burns d sears its way into one's mind and one's irit. Listen:

> In a few weeks—or maybe a few days —I shall die. I shall leave my husband, my two teen-age girls and my blue-eyed Richard, who is only 12. Every relentless tick of the clock measures off what remains of my life. *Yet I am a happy woman!*

I wanted to know what was back of this markable victory, so I read on, underoring passages. How was it possible for e living under death's imminent foreosure to say so gallantly: "I am a happy oman." Well, she gives us the clue to her ctory in a few capsule sentences. "I would ther live 42 full, rich years than twice that ng in dull tempo . . . . After surgery, I ked no questions . . . . There was no magic . . . Right then and there I accepted the evitable . . . . I ruled out bitterness and sentment." Then her minister came with a ok of prayers. Quickly she committed to emory the lines: "I am content to leave my dear ones to Thy care, believing that hy love for them is greater than my own." ow that she had placed her life in the nds of God, her next big step was to give controls over the future. Her own happiess and that of her family would now depend upon her ability to live from day to day. Listen to her closing words:

> "I have no regrets—my life has been rich and full, and I have loved every minute of it.
>
> "But if I were to live it over, I would take more time for such savoring of beauty — sunrises; opening crabapple blossoms; the patina of an old brass coffee pot; the delighted surprised look on a tiny girl's face as she pets a kitty for the first time.
>
> "I would live each day as if it were my last one, as I am now doing."

Here we have illustrated in flesh what it can mean to you and to me if we will take seriously the counsel of the Psalmist: "This is the day which the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it."

What consequences will there be if we put our lives on a day by day basis?

I

The first is obvious: since we will have relinquished controls over the future we will thereby have ruled out one source of unnecessary anxiety. Emerson observed that most people seem to be driven through life, as though some tyrant were pursuing them with throngs. That tyrant is fear.

Fears arise from many sources, but the sharpest ones arise out of the unknown. It was for this reason that Jesus admonished his contemporaries: "Therefore do not be anxious about the tomorrow, for tomorrow will be anxious for itself. Let the day's own trouble be sufficient for the day." For a long time we had trouble with that text. The King James translators had said: "Take therefore no thought for the tomorrow." That did not make sense to us. We could not believe that it correctly represented Jesus' view. He himself had made extensive plans for the future. On the last night when

he was to have fellowship with his disciples, he revealed his deep concern for the future in the instituting of the Lord's Supper, a visible means by which he hoped his memory would be kept alive. He did not say that one ought to take no thought for the tomorrow, but he did warn against destructive anxiety over an uncertain future. He called for the exercise of faith. "You believe in God, believe also in me." When he challenged his friends to have faith in God, it was an appeal for faith in life itself. "Look at the birds of the air: they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them . . . Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they neither toil nor spin; yet I tell you, even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. But if God so clothes the grass of the field, which today is alive and tomorrow is thrown into the oven, will he not much more clothe you, O men of little faith?" Such faith in life, in God, would abolish needless worry over the future.

There is a vast difference between being anxious over the tomorrow and having a healthy concern for what the future may bring. Surely, no one of us can live through these days without an abiding concern over the great issues that face us. But if we are to meet and master these problems, we must conserve our strength so that we will be able to live creatively each day. Dr. Richard R. Marrett says there are two kinds of fears: the fears that paralyze and the fears that instruct. It was against the needless, unnecessary, destructive anxieties — the anxieties that paralyze—that Jesus warned. If we can with confidence say, "This is the day the Lord has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it," each day will become an adventure in abundant living.

II

Let us go on now to a second observation. If we live fully each day we will thereby store up spiritual and mental resources which will enable us to rejoice even when the long night of trouble comes.

Think for a moment of the people you have known who, when faced with some enormous sorrow, have been undefeated. Have they not been the people who have learned the art of living fully from day to day? The people who haven taken no beauty for granted—the song of a bird, the mystery of an unfolding blossom, the loyalty of a friend, a canvas in an art gallery. And when trouble did come they could say: "Life has been good. My days have been full of joy. I have no fears, no regrets."

Let me tell you a story about Maurice Maeterlinck. One morning he had gone fo a walk in the French countryside, when h was attracted by a marvelous fragranc borne on the breeze. He turned aside fron the road and walked into a beautiful garden

In the center of the garden was a smal house and at the head of the path leadin up to the door stood an old woman. H knew at once that she was creator of thi beauty. "This is a wonderful place you have,' he said to her. "Do you like flowers?" sh asked. "Then come in . . . ."

The remarkable woman did not look u at him but she led him on a tour througl her garden, astonishing him with her amaz ing knowledge of the history of the flowers "These—foxglove, forget-me-not, lily of th valle, violets and daisies — I call old flow ers, because they have been known for cen turies in Europe." Pointing to another patc —marigold, hollyhock and others—she calle these her newcomers. They had been brough by voyagers of the Renaissance who ha found them in distant lands. He asked he how she knew her flowers in such precis detail and she replied: "I learned to use m eyes each day as if, the next morning, would no longer be able to see. Then I foun that nothing I had seen could ever be take from me."

Years have passed, but Mr. Maeterlinc says that never can he forget that memorabl day. When he was ready to leave, smilin she lifted her head to say goodbye and h saw the cataracts in her sightless eyes. Sh had made good use of her vision, before th long night came.

Not far-fetched. What she accomplishe you and I, too, can do. Miracles of characte are possible for each of us. If we will fil the day with adventure and love, when th night closes in about us there will be a ligh within us that no darkness can expunge When George Santayana was a very ol man he said, "The charm I find in old age— for I was never happier than I am now— comes of having learned to live in th moment, and thereby in eternity."

Recently, I heard a famous athlete recoun the story of his life. He had won his way t prominence in the sports world against in superable odds. He was born in the slum of New York City; he was denied an op portunity for a college education; yet h had a consuming passion to become a bal player. Always undersize he had to figh harder than others for his gains. After a brilliant career in sports the night of physi cal blindness came abruptly. Yet he was no defeated. As he spoke, though his eyes wer sightless, there was a note of joy in hi

ce. "In some respects," said he, "life is tter than it has ever been. I am doing ne writing and each week talking to young ple about what they may accomplish if y have perserverance in their work." He l lived enthusiastically each day so that en the night came there was a light hin which no darkness could put out.

III

We come now to my final observation. If put life on a day to day basis, not only l we eliminate uncalled for anxieties, deop mental and spiritual resources, but we ll come to know God as our constant mpanion. The people who have heeded the almist's counsel and rejoiced in the day ich God has given to them have discover- something wonderful. God ceases to be blind force, an absentee land-lord, or an a to be discussed casually as one might me theory in physics. God becomes the od Shepherd who knows his sheep and ose love and care reaches out to the one o is lost in the storm. There is no night dark but God illuminates it; no abyss so p but God is there; no personal problem over-towering but God upholds our hands d speaks words of courage to us. Whittier sed this deeper truth:

I know not where his islands lift
Their fronded palms in air;
I only know I cannot drift
Beyond his love and care.

We do not know what happened to the thor of the 118 Psalm, but some tremends experience had turned him from defeat to tory. "Out of my distress," he says, "I led on the Lord; the Lord answered me d set me free." This man who had despair- of life could now sing: "O give thanks the Lord, for he is good; his steadfast e endures forever."

Not alone in pleasant places do we find d, but he comes to us in those awful ments when, as Amos said, "the sun nt down at noon." When we face some e experience and friends have come as far as they can, then God joins us. We may not be able to describe his coming to us, but we avow: "This is the Lord's doing, and it is marvelous in our sight." Often God comes to us when our hearts are breaking, when our dreams have been shattered and the trail ahead is a blurred outline, uncertain and insecure. But if we have lived well each day, when the dark hour comes, there will be light for us even in the night.

Let me close this message with lines written by my good friend and teacher, Winfred Ernest Garrison. These lines are autobiography, for the author has known sickness and disappointment. He arose above these adversities to become a distinguished historian and author.

Along with these accomplishments he also plays the violin and is somewhat of a sculptor.

I have no care for what the world
may do to me,
For I have riches that it cannot take
And poverty that it cannot enrich . . .
And the rest does not greatly matter.
I love life, but I do not fear death,
For it is cool and comforting and
friendly . . .

I will work today for a guerdon long
deferred;
I will labor to plant a tree in the
distant hope of fruit—
Perhaps not for my gathering and
eating—
For ease is not important
And planting is as beautiful as harvesting.
But I will not poison a moment with
fear or anger,
Or starve a day with empty-heartedness.
Who kills a day of fragrant loveliness
Kills an inch of himself, for life is a
day and a day and a day.

"This is the day which the Lord has made." O God, help us "to rejoice and be glad in it."

low to Be Happy in Prison

LARENCE J. FORSBERG, Garden Street Methodist Church, Bellingham, Washington

One of the first rules of preaching, it always seems to me, is that the preacher's essage should be practical and relevant to e listener. From that standpoint, my topic ay not seem too promising. This is a very spectable congregation, and the chances e that few of us will ever be incarcerated. However, even though you may not get to prison during your lifetime, the odds are great that you may experience some kind of isolation.

For example, there are some people who are prisoners of ill health. Through no fault of their own, often enough, they are sentenc-

ed to loneliness and confinement through some physical breakdown or because of some congenital weakness. Some of them are fortunate in that the sentence is relatively light, but there are others who suffer for years.

Again, there are some people who are prisoners of an acute kind of loneliness that has been brought on by some deep-seated emotional factor. It may be through no fault of their own. Something has happened somewhere along the line that has driven them into a shell, and made them extremely sensitive and shy and withdrawn. We have no idea of how painful it can be for such a person to try to break out of that shell. Sometimes we misinterpret such persons, assuming that they are unfriendly and cold by choice. We can be terribly wrong about them.

Or again, there are some people who are prisoners of old age. They have been sentenced to isolation and loneliness by passing years. They are not old and shut-in by choice. Time has simply passed them by; their friends and associates have gone on before; the feeling of being needed is no longer there; they find themselves alone in a room, counting days with no goal ahead.

There are other kinds of isolation in life, but these should suffice to show that any one of us is apt to spend time in isolation. We may be perfectly innocent victims. We may have done nothing to deserve the sentence, but that will not make us exempt. Life has a way of catching up with us in an unexpected moment, and putting us into a situation where we would not choose to be. Maybe this can be a practical sermon for someone who right now is facing some kind of isolation and dreading it.

My text comes from a letter that was written from an actual prison. It was written by the Apostle Paul, who was an old hand at prison-sitting. He was not guilty of any crime against society. It was simply that the Romans were afraid of his powerful new gospel.

In Second Timothy Paul wrote from prison to a young associate in anticipation of a visit from him. Because of his past experience in prison, he had an urgent request to make. He wrote, "When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas; also bring the books, and especially the parchments." Paul knew what it took to be happy in prison, and he was making provision against his indeterminate sentence.

Sometimes it seems to me that when we set out to minister to people in prison—and I am talking now about the prison of illness or old age—we overlook a very essential part of our ministry. We assume that physical needs can be entrusted to others, and that our ministry should be more "spiritual," consisting of prayers, and Bible verses, and spiritual comfort. In fact, some of us go so far as to depreciate material needs.

Frequently when I have made a hospital call, I come away feeling that the most significant thing I have done has been to fresh- en a pillow, or to adjust a bed, or to provide a fresh glass of ice cold water. What a ministry we could perform if only we were more sensitive to people's physical needs. I know that there are nurses who are trained to do these things and who do them well. But you and I could also do them with an added touch of love and concern.

I was listening sometime ago to some reports at a business meeting of the woman's society. The calling committee had submitted a report, with statistics involving the number of calls made, the cards sent, the flowers and home-made cookies distributed. I got to thinking about that report and wondered what some of my more sophisticated friends would think about it. Home-made cookies and shut-ins! That hardly seems like a vital statistic. And then I remembered the words of Jesus, "Then the King will say to those on his right hand, 'Come, O blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world; for I was hungry and ye gave me food, I was thirsty and ye gave me drink, I was a stranger and ye welcomed me. I was naked and ye clothed me, I was sick and ye visited me, I was in prison and ye came unto me . . in as much as ye did it to one of the least of these my brethren ye did it unto me!"

But Paul asked for more than his cloak. He wanted his books too. There has been much speculation as to what those books were. Some people have assumed that they included the scriptures, the Old Testament writings, and maybe one of the early gospels of Jesus. Others think that they included the blank parchments upon which Paul could write his pastoral letters. We can't be sure what they were, but it was obvious that Paul did not want to face those prison months without his books. They were a passport to happiness for him.

"When you come, bring my cloak which I left at Troas; also bring my books, and especially the parchments." Paul knew the secret of how to be happy in prison. Let me point out two things that helped to keep his content.

I

In the first place, Paul could be happy in prison because he had an unfettered mind.

Here was a man who was literally in ains. The Roman authorities would take chances on losing custody of this prison- . His physical movement was completely stricted. But Paul knew better than any- e else that no man could imprison his mind ainst his will. When Timothy brought his oks, they would only serve to emphasize at freedom. He was free to think great oughts, to keep company with great irits, and to ream far and wide among the ople whom he knew and loved.

When a person becomes a prisoner of ness or circumstances, he has two choices. e can spend his time thinking about him- lf and his own miseries, or he can de- erately set his mind free to think about her things and other persons. In a large asure, his happiness depends upon which urse he takes.

In my first church, I regularly made two lls on persons who had been sentenced to olation through illness. The first was a ne year old boy, who had been ill and in d for more than a year when I met him. e had a serious condition involving rheu- atic fever. His friends were free to play seball and football, go to the movies and tend parties, go to school and attend urch. During the two years I knew him, mmy never left his own room. It was a ain room in a modest home. His mother d to work, and sometimes he would be ft alone for several hours at a time. But never knew him when he was despondent depressed. He made our visits exciting. n the wall beside his bed was a homemade okcase filled with books, model ships and anes, and other things.

The other person was an older lady whose validism was complicated by extreme verty. Her home was a one room shack. e could not move without her wheelchair. er one leg had been amputated at the hip. ut what a spirit she possessed. On that day hen I took her into church membership, she ked me soberly if this meant that she had give up going to dances!

Thinking of those two free spirits, I re- ember a wonderful line about Robert Louis evenson. You may remember that the great thor was a semi-invalid most of his life. me of his best adventure stories were itten while he was confined to a sickbed. ut his biographer said a great thing about im: "He never allowed the medicine bottle the bedside table to become the edge of is horizon, or the spot of blood on his ndkerchief the chief factor in his life."

Paul was happy in prison because he kept n unfettered mind.

II

In the second place, Paul was happy in prison because he had an inseparable comrade.

The way he expressed this truth is found in the words: "Christ dwelleth in me." That may sound strange to us, but what he meant was that Jesus had become such a real friend and presence in his life, that it was almost as if he dwelt within Paul. It did not matter where Paul went, his Companion was with him. It did not matter how they multiplied the guard, or locked the prison doors. There was no way in which they could lock out the Christ. He was a real presence for Paul; he dwelt within the Apostle's heart.

There have been others who have testified to this. Martin Niomoeller, while in prison, was called on a Christmas Eve by the commander of the concentration camp to administer communion to a condemned prisoner who had requested it. There were three persons present in that cell: Niomoeller, a Jewish prisoner who played several Christmas chorales on a violin, and the condemned man. But Niomoeller tells us that there was a fourth person present, the real presence of Christ.

Olin Stockwell is the Methodist missionary who was held for an extended period by the Chinese Commuists. After his release, he wrote about his experience in this way: "I can assure you that nothing became more real to me in prison than the certainty that I was not alone. Day after day, when I should have been planning suicide or going crazy with loneliness, I would feel the sustaining power of God . . . What was true of me was true of others also . . . We were learning the same lesson, 'That you cannot isolate a Christian.' "

When you have a seven year old son, you meet many people you might otherwise miss. On a recent trip, the first night out of Chicago, our seven year old came back to the compartment saying that "Richard's father" had invited him to dinner in the diner. Richard was an eleven year old boy from a ranch in Montana. I told Chuck that it was all right, but that I wanted to meet Richard's father. We were introduced in the club car.

Later on I was to discover that Richard's father was returning from New York where he had undergone special treatment in connection with a serious illness. He was a rancher in Montana. Late that evening when I was walking through the club car again he invited me to sit down and talk. He asked me what I did, and I explained that I was a Methodist minister. His face lighted up as he explained that he had been raised a

Methodist, and he was delighted to meet a clergyman of his own faith.

When he discovered that I was a minister, he wanted to tell me about his boy Richard. He explained that he was an adopted boy, and that they had had him for two years. He said that the boy had grown up on the streets, and that he was uncouth, profane, and headed for trouble. The courts had taken him away from his step-father. At the age of nine, he had already been in serious trouble. The rancher and his wife had taken him in. They had taught him to ride and to love the out-of-doors. They had provided for his schooling, and had even set up a trust fund for his future education. He was an amazingly well behaved and quiet boy, very clean and attractive. They had done a good job with him.

The rancher said that when he first came, he and his wife had talked about how they would raise him and they had decided that he needed some religious training. However, their ranch was thirty miles from the nearest church. They had a Bible and they knew the Lord's Prayer, and so they decided to teach him. The very first night, at bedtime, they had knelt down with him and taught him how to pray.

Then Richard's mother broke into the conversation and she said, "You know, we do it every night now, at bedtime. We never miss. Sometimes there are cowboys in the bunkhouse. We have old rodeo friends who stop by, and in the busy season we never have less than six or seven hands. Sometimes the talk gets pretty rough. But at nine o'clock Richard knows that its bedtime, and we all go down on our knees. My husband tells those cowboys that if they want to join us they can, but that they don't have to. It gets awfully quiet in there, when we begin to say, "Our Father, who are in Heaven . . ."

Somehow or other I forgot all about the shiny leather and the polished chrome of the club car, and in my imagination I could see that bunkhouse with those people trying at least to do what they knew was right. And I had the feeling that somehow when they knelt together there, the three of them in that remote little ranchhouse in northern Montana, there was a fourth who stood beside them. Christ kept strange company in his own day, stranger than that, and he turned up in some strange places.

Now if Christ could be a real companion to Paul in chains, and if his presence could be a real experience in a condemned man's cell in Berlin and in a Red Chinese prison camp, and if Christ can find his way to a rough bunkhouse in northern Montana, why should it be so unreasonable to believe that he can be our companion and our constant comrade? I for one choose to believe that his presence can be a reality in a hospital room at St. Luke's or St. Joseph's, and that he can be a daily companion in the room of that shut-in who lives all alone, and that he can penetrate even through that shell of ultra-sensitivity which isolates the introvert and protects his inner self. There are no walls that can keep him out. Paul knew that he could be happy in prison, because he had an inseparable comrade!

Those are two reasons for Paul's contentment in prison. His mind was free, and his constant companionship with Christ was unthreatened.

III

One of the books that I have read is the story of a man who spent twenty years in prison, and yet who remained a source of strength and cheer and happiness to his friends. His name was Edward Sheldon, and the title of his biography is *The Man Who Lived Twice.*

Edward Sheldon was a playwright and a near genius. His first play was written when he was just out of Harvard. It was called *Salvation Nell* and it was a Broadway hit. Other plays by him were just as successful. He was recognized as the most promising writer of his day. But just as he seemed to have reached the very peak of fame, clouds began to gather. The first indication of trouble was that he felt a stiffness in his joints and muscles. He tried to shake it off, but it wouldn't go away. He went to doctors and they treated him, but nothing seemed to help. He thought that maybe a change of climate would be of value, but even that was of no avail. Arthritis began to get more and more severe until his friends and associates began to notice. It grew progressively worse until finally he could not move a single muscle. He had made money through his plays, and his family was wealthy, so he had no financial problems. When it became obvious that he would be bedfast, he took a penthouse apartment in New York City and there he went to bed, never to rise again. He needed constant care. Pretty soon the illness began to affect his eyes. It was extremely painful, but he did not compain. Then he lost his eyesight. He could hear and speak. His sickroom became a center of helpfulness. The great and the near great beat a path to his door. Constantly he ministered to them, giving them advice, building up their morale, proving an unfailing source of inspiration. He developed a sixth

nse, seeming to know when his friends eeded a lift from him. Every day telegrams ould go out from his penthouse, speaking st the right word of love and understand-g. One of the things that sustained him as his books. The apartment was lined ith books, and his nurses and attendants ere chosen for their ability to read. Every-ing was grist for his mill, and he "read" ooks on science, and philosophy, and mys-ry, and fiction, and even college catalogues. or twenty years he was a prisoner of rthritis and blindness, but he never lost his reedom.

He was not a Christian in the orthadox nse of the word, although he revealed more f the Christian virtues than most of us. owever, toward the last, when life began to wane, he kept coming back again and again to one request. He wanted the Gospel of John read to him.

When Thornton Wilder wrote his great novel, *The Ides of March,* he inscribed it to this remarkable man with these words: "Edward Sheldon, who though immobile and blind for over twenty years, was the dispenser of wisdom, courage, and gaiety to a large number of people."

There are many kinds of prisons that men face in this world. They are not always made of stone walls and iron bars. We face different kinds of isolation, confinement and loneliness. But there is a way to be happy in prison. A man can keep an unfettered mind and he can have the sustaining power of an inseparable Comrade.

The Eternal Horizon of Life

GENE E. BARTLETT, The First Baptist Church — Los Angeles 5, California

In writing to the early Christians not to e ashamed of Christ and to take their share f suffering for the gospel, the writer of I Timothy set it in a wide horizon. It was ecause of Christ Jesus who, as his word has "abolished death and brought life and mmortality to light." Notice that it is both *ife* and *immortality.* It's all one, tied togeth-r. Our purpose is not to count our chances or future life. It is the question as to wether fe anywhere, here or there, has any signifi-ance, any worth, any dignity. If our lives re but a brief span before oblivion, almost nevitably we shall fall into the conviction hat getting by is enough. The life of Christ tands full against such a view. He has rought life and immortality to light."

I

How do you believe in it? Where do you ook to find the eternal horizon around your fe? First of all, even reason throws us to-ard the eternal horizon.

Consider what it requires of us to believe hat death suddenly comes in to write the inal answer. It would seem to me like work-ng on a complicated mathematical problem, nd just at the point where the answer is bout to be heard having someone step in and ay, "The answer really doesn't matter after ll." All of life has in it orders and law. Even the atheist must acknowledge this. When you look at life where a person emerg-s out of a single cell, grows to the wonder-ul complexity of maturity, spends the years n learning to discipline his mind and his eart, can you really answer that nothing really important or permanent is going on ere? Can you believe that somehow by chance life appears and by chance will dis-appear? Who can help crying to such a belief, "You're wrong, so deeply wrong. You violate not only my dignity but even my reason." Can we believe that God could fashion a human life out of nothing to maturity and then, as it were, throw it all aside as though it had been a careless diver-sion, a thought for the moment and not a soul fashioned for eternity? Even reason will support the insight of Tennyson:

> O, yet we trust that somehow good
> Will be the final goal of ill,
> To pangs of nature, sins of will,
> Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;
>
> That nothing walks with aimless feet,
> That not one life will be destroyed;
> Or cast as rubbish to the void,
> When God hath made the pile complete.

II

Now let us go beyond reason. For life does. In the second place, our deepest feel-ings put an eternal horizon around life. One of our contemporary playwrights, Thornton Wilder, has stated it even more directly when in the play, *Our Town,* one of the characters says, "I don't care what they say, everybody knows that something is eternal."

And it is so profoundly true. We do know. I believe that love is eternal. When you ask me why I believe in the horizon of immor-tality about life, I must honestly answer that there is a quality in love itself which speaks of its permanence. I cannot conceive of a day when that love will cease to be.

Also courage tells us what is eternal. John Gunther, known to us for his journalism,

wrote a moving testimony some years ago when his teen-age son was taken by death. The title of his book was fittingly, *Death, Be Not Proud.* In it is the word of the attending physician who said to Gunther that seeing the way the boy had fought, seeing his refusal to accept defeat, could only make a physician believe that his spirit would live on. The physician said that, surely, there must be an immortality at which men of science could guess but not fully understand. Some of us today would confess that our own belief has been strengthened by seeing courage like that.

Isn't great literature also a reminder that there is something eternal? How often I find myself in a home or a hospital or in the quietness of my study saying with another, "The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want." Almost every time it comes to me with a sense of awe that for fully twenty-five hundred years men have been affirming that same faith, and it is just as timeless today as it was then.

III

So reason can turn our eyes to the eternal horizon, and our deepest feelings can confirm it. But there is still something more. These in themselves are not enough. And that more for us who are Christian is clear. We find the eternal horizon revealed at last in the victory of Christ over death.

Now here we stand before that experience for which words really fail. We shall see it not so much in our words but in the lives of those who were touched by it. And the fact is clear. To those who had given their all to Christ there came a conviction beyond all dispute that God had brought Christ to life again, and the final answer was revealed in Him. Oh, there are differences about the details as to how it happened. The Gospels themselves do not agree. But there is one thing that is not questioned. It did happen. Somehow God had given His answer and for all. He had revealed that when death has done its all, life is still the victor. Christ lives, and so shall we.

You see, there are some events in human life so important that we look beyond them as the great corners in human progress. Once they are turned we cannot turn back. Men might speculate, for example, as to whether the earth was flat or round, but once Magellan sailed around it there could be no doubt. From that time on the answer was beyond dispute. It was the kind of experience where once is enough. You do not need to go on proving it over and over. Men might speculate as to whether disease is imparted by germs. But once Pasteur demonstrated it so that all men could see, it was no longer questioned. Man's search for the conquest over disease had passed another milestone. You would not turn back from there. We could also wonder whether man would ever touch the source of atomic energy. But one day in a desert place in our country, the first attempt brought the answer, and the atomic age had come. Man could not go back. He had gone into the atomic age, and the door had shut behind him.

In the deepest things of all, Christ revealed the answers that made life different from that time on. He had shown the conquest of disease as He healed men and women. He had shown that sin could be broken in its shackles when He set a man free to pick up his bed and walk. He had demonstrated beyond a doubt that the grace of God could make a broken man to be whole again when He had brought quietness of mind to a tormented soul. All of these Christ had done, and doing them even once was enough to prove the possibility, yes, the reality of it. But when he had done all these, there was still the deepest question of all. What about death? Was Christ to win the early battles over disease or brokenness or sin only to lose at last in the final encounter with death? Of course, the answer had to be given to that, and God did give the answer. When Christ came to death and all the forces of denial were lined against Him, there came on that third day the final word, the answer that was once and for all. In death, too, the final victory belongs to God. Life is still life, indestructible, precious, invincible by the grace of God. That's what was meant when the writer of the Letter to Timothy spoke of "our Saviour Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light."

IV

You see why we cherish the word that has come. It is as though we walked once up to the great chasm that divides this life from the life to come, and we called across the anxious inquiry, "Oh, God, are You there? Is our home there, too?" And the answer came back just once to let us know that He is there, and that, too, is our home. Once is enough. You never need doubt again.

My hope is not that our minds have been convinced as much as that our hearts have been warmed. We began with the search for the eternal horizon of life. We come at last to the essential truth that the difference it makes is here and now. It is living out the answer to the question as to whether our lives are only temporary or permanent.

Some years ago a little niece of ours was siting our home. She had just started to to Sunday School and lived every moment it. In fact, she wanted to go every day. ach day she would ask. Finally on Saturay we said, "Tomorrow you may go." So arly on Sunday morning we heard her jump from bed and call down to us anxiously, "Is this tomorrow?" And at last we were able to say, "Yes, child, this is tomorrow." It is also the eternal tomorrow beginning here and now. For the life to come has come. We have been in it all the time living surrounded by the horizon of eternity.

BOOKS FOR PULPIT PREACHING

Continued from page 2

uman life. Aside from the evangelical fervor these messages, many a pastor will find ere the character and substance of excelnt homiletic effectiveness. (Oxford, 228 p., $3.75)

The Invincible Christ by Massey Mott eltzel is rewarding reading for at least ree reasons. First, in thirteen sermons on e eternal significance of Jesus, the author ghlights emphases which are infrequently ard. Christ is introduced as the Dawnnger, the Seeker, the Reassurer, the rvant, the Disturber, and so on. Second, e author suggests the bases for sermon ries, for these sermons almost compel a stor to present to his people the enlarged ortrait of Christ which this book vigorous- portrays. Third, the volume is rich in lustrative materials, quotations and stories. Abingdon, 142 pp., $2.)

Robert W. Spike in his remarkable analys of the Church as the redeemed people of od, *In But Not of the World,* presents three octrinal definitions of the Church — as ellowship, the Body of Christ, the Proclaimer of the Word of God — and two eological questions—salvation apart from e Church and the Kingdom of God. Each the five sections is introduced with an pisode," a true to life narrative, and then llowed by a doctrinal statement and a disussion of the concept in terms of the cultural life of the Church. The author of this notebook of theology and practice in the cal church" is director of the Department Evangelism of the Congregational Christan Churches. (Association, 110 pp., $2.)

God and You, A Faith to Live By is an ttempt by William M. Hunter to combat e spiritual illiteracy of our times by anvering not the question of belief in God ut by answering questions about God. ermons having subjects such as "I'll Buy hat," "Now He's Getting Personal," "It's ontr-r-rary to Experience" and "At the ound of the Tone" deal with many of the ajor theological emphases in an enthusiasic, down-to-earth manner. (Revell, 159 pp., 2.50)

Harper's new Torchbook series offers many great titles at a reasonable price. The most recent releases include the following: Evelyn Underhill's classic, *Worship,* a comprehensive presentation of the nature and principles of worship (350 pp., $1.75). George Santayana's *Interpretations of Poetry and Religion,* a brilliant interpretation of both subjects according to varied perspectives (290 pp., $1.45). *Meister Eckhart,* a modern translation of the principle ideas and sermons along with biographical and introductory chapters on the celebrated fourteenth century mystic and scholar (333 pp., $1.45). Martin Buber's *Eclipse of God,* studies in the relation of religion and philosophy and a critique of such twentieth century thought as Existentialism, Crisis Theology and Jungian Psychology (152 pp., $1.15)

The World's Great Religions by the editors of *Life* brings together the widely heralded magazine series, plus some 165 pages of additional material and a skillfully selected anthology of the basic writings of the world's spiritual heritage. This handsome, double sized volume includes 190 pages in full color photography and art. Nearly half of the book is devoted to Christianity. Perhaps the most appealing aspects of the book are the evidences of thorough research and the vivid writing. (Time, Inc., 310 pp., $13.50)

Seeking to Be Christian in Race Relations by Benjamin E. Mays is a compelling statement on "one of the most disturbing and perhaps the most baffling problem confronting mankind today." The book is blunt and persuasive, stringent and inspirational. This examination is not a shallow document, but plummets deeply into biblical faith and into the Christian conscience. It is must reading for those who hope for a better day. (Friendship, 84 pp., $1.50)

Four new volumes have been added to the World Christian Book series. They are: *Religious Liberty* by Giovanni Miegge, professor of New Testament, Waldensian Theological Seminary, Rome, Italy; *The Cross Is Heaven,* the life and writings of Sadhu Sundar Singh, edited by A. J. Appasamy; *A Letter of Wise Counsel,* studies in First Peter by Edward A. Maycock; and *Who Is Jesus?* by Stephen Neill. Sponsored by the

International Missionary Council, the volumes in this series will soon be made available in the world's main languages. (Association, $1.25 each).

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WORTH QUOTING

Continued from page 2

ing up, Ike maintained his earnestness about helping his son learn new things, get ahead and avoid bad habits. And always Ike's way of accomplishing these ends was indirect. For example, just before John entered West Point as a cadet, Ike decided to discourage him from smoking. But instead of lecturing about the evils of tobacco, he simply offered to add to John's allowance the amount he would have otherwise spent on cigarettes. The strategy worked . . . .

This combination of strength and discipline on the one hand, and parental warmth and concern on the other, helps explain why John Eisenhower was prepared to cope with the problem of suddenly becoming a great man's son.

Flora Rheta Schreiber, *Ike and His Only Son*

* * * *

A loving father . . . interprets through his own life the love of God. His altruism, his sense of responsibility for and his participation in community work, his recognition of the brotherhood of man are characteristics that his child will wish to emulate if he finds that his father's Christianity extends also to him. He will want to be like this man who respects him, listens to him, forgives him when he errs and loves him at all times, even as God does.

Many adults look back upon their mothers as the chief factor in the molding of their personalities. If, however, they were to consider carefully their relationships with their fathers, they would begin to understand the many subtle ways in which fathers influence the personality development of their children. Even though this influence is less active and less continuous than that of the mother, it is tremendously important in that it has to do with the formation of feelings and attitudes toward people, the development of an ability to make decisions and the building of ideals and principles on which the decisions of adulthood are made.

Jean A. Thompson, *The Father's Role*

* * * *

A young lad was leaving home to enter college. His mother, solicitous for her boy, made all sorts of preparations, and gave the young man much good advice. The father said little; but when the day came for the departure, he went with his son over to the station to see him off. When the time came for the boy to board the train, the father took the boy's hand in his, gave it a hearty squeeze, and said, "Now, son, don't forget whose son you are."

What a glory to remember who they are that are depending upon us, and those to whom we truly belong! In the highest reaches of that thought, we stand face to face with our Lord. Don't forget whose son you are.

* * * *

A little girl always became frightened during lightning storms at night. She would cry out and her father would go to her bedside. Then she would murmur, "Hand, father, hand." When the father took her little hand in his, she would then fall asleep, confident that nothing could harm her if only her father was there.

If, in the storms that we all must meet along life's pathway, we would reach up in faith for our heavenly Father's protection, we would find perfect security and assurance in his divine presence. In our distress he is only waiting for us to seek his help.

"Lord, I would place my hand in Thine,
Nor ever murmur nor repine;
Content, whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me.

Marjorie Darling, *The Secret Place*

* * * *

The reason why Christianity does not thrill some people today is: they no longer regard it as a message. They regard it merely as "a religion," whatever that may mean! But if Christianity were no more than "a religion," as that word is commonly understood today, it would be nothing. It is a message about an objective fact, about something that happened—the victory of Christ, as the Substitute and Representative of man, over the powers of Sin and Death. If that victory did not take place, Christianity is a myth. If it did, Christianity is a message. And it must be accepted or rejected on that basis.

Herman W. Gockel, *The Cross and the Common Man* (Concordia)

* * * *

If you want to live without trouble, you will have to die young . . . If I had a formula for by-passing trouble, I would not pass it around. I would not be doing anybody a favor, trouble creates a capacity to handle it. I do not say embrace trouble. That is as bad as treating it as an enemy. But I do say, meet it as a friend, for you will see

lot of it and had better be on speaking erms with it.

No, trouble is not the scourge of the world. he world has its ups and downs. So have eople, and all the speechifying that breath an produce will not change things . . . . ou can not run away from trouble. Accept . Do not worry about it. Have faith—and o the needful.

Oliver Wendell Holmes

* * * *

Many fine things can be done in a day, —we don't make that day tomorrow.

* * * *

Isn't it too bad that some folks never earn that uncovering the other fellow's aults will never cover up their own?

* * * *

Lypiatt Cathedral had its own distinctive mell. It was as if the prayers of the faithful throughout history had not all ascended o God but had become wedged in the rafters nd gone bad up there.

Joyce Warren, *The New Yorker*

* * * *

Where does time go? These days time is ven more elusive than money. If you want o find out where the time goes and then erhaps to save it, you will have to pay close ttention to how you manage it. If you want ore time for things you really want to do, ou can find it somewhere. But you have to want it very much—planning and saving lways call for discipline.

Lillian M. Gilbreth, *Making the Ends Meet*

* * * *

In 1954 there were 4,200,000 people who ame into the United States to live. These eople knew nothing of our way of life, our deals, or our principles. In fact, they could ot even speak our language, and had never eard of our religion. These 4 million people, were, of course, the babies born in this country that year. These children are the direct esponsibility of us as citizens, as parents, as eachers, as civic leaders, and as Sunday-chool teachers. If we fail, what chance is here for this great republic in the next eneration? Our ancestors came to this ountry looking for freedom, and they found t. But freedom is something that must be arned. With freedom there rests responsibility.

Henry W. Phillips

* * * *

There are two books which should be in very home and be read by every member f the family. They are the Bible, which tells of the miracles of God, and the seed catalog, which proves them.

Burton Hillis

* * * *

The Christian message "Christ Victorious —Mankind Freed" is always in danger of losing its life and luster by the sheer fact of its endless repetition. Men may find it difficult to get excited over a message which, for more than a thousand years, has been spoken in the stilted language of ornate liturgies and religious rituals. But the message is still true; it is still based upon a fact of history.

Herman W. Gockel, *The Cross and the Common Man*

* * * *

No rope is strong enough to hang the truth.

Russian Proverb

* * * *

Christian giving is God's Divine Plan to make us like Himself; it reveals our religion and bares our souls; it is prophetic and has to do with the inner life; it creates an inner sensitiveness and gives a keener vision of His work and plans.

Warren H. Denison

* * * *

I simply argue that the Cross be raised at the center of the market place as well as on the steeple of the Church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a Cathedral between two candles, but on a Cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek (or shall we say in English, in Bantu, and in Afrikaans?); at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where He died. And that is what He died about. And that is where Churchmen should be and what churchmen should be about.

George MacLeod

* * * *

I divide the world into three classes—the few who make things happen, the many who watch things happen, and the overwhelming majority who have no notion of what happens.

Nicholas Murray Butler

* * * *

Everyone should try to find a spot to be alone, in order to have a proper opportunity to concentrate and to think. We have too little space and too little time, and therefore the tension on our nerves become too great.

Queen Juliana of the Netherlands

A Sheaf of Pulpit Prayers

LOWELL M. ATKINSON, First Methodist Church, Englewood, New Jersey

I

Our Heavenly Father, we gather together here in Thy presence that we may receive Thy grace and that we may offer ourselves unto Thee, our gifts, our abilities, our willingness, all that we are, for Thy service. We ask that the light that shines from Thy eternal life may truly illumine our life on earth. Grant that we may share in that glory that comes only from Thee.

We thank Thee for the privilege of the assembling of ourselves together in this fellowship of the faithful, the congregation of those who have their confidence in Thee. May our being together be a source of encouragement and uplift to each one. Grant that Thy church everywhere this day may increase in strength and spiritual power, and may Thy blessing be upon Thy people all about this earth.

We ask that Thou wilt especially touch with Thy Holy Spirit those who are sick and those who have their own particular problems. Grant that Thou wilt be in the mind and heart of each person this day, and all who are near and dear to us.

We come together that we may go forth with increased spiritual understanding, and therefore wilt Thou quicken our minds. We come together that we may have a finer sensitivity to the possibilities of growing in grace and the knowledge of right and wrong, and therefore wilt Thou illumine our conscience. We come together that we may find the deeper satisfactions of life, and therefore wilt Thou meet with us, for Thou alone canst satisfy the hungry soul. And when to our eager questions life gives but a hot and dusty answer, Thou alone canst bring refreshment through the living water of Thy truth.

So truly be with us and be in our hearts. And may there be no one present this day but who goes forth knowing the glory of the lighted mind and the happiness of the life than can be lived in Thy presence, through the grace of our Saviour Jesus Christ.

—Amen.

II

Our Heavenly Father, we gather together to rejoice in Thy living presence. We thank Thee for the thought of the infinite vitality of Thy being, and the offer of abundant vitality to us whose lives are committed to Thee. We thank Thee for the sheer joy of living in Thy presence and in Thy world, and the wonder of sharing in Thy spirit and expressing Thy love.

We gather together to renew our purpose, to deepen our commitments, to strengthen our high resolve to belong to Thee. And we ask that Thou wilt grant Thy blessings and the richness of Thy grace, and with the strong sweep of Thy hand reach o'er the great gulf between us and Thee and claim us for Thine own. We thank Thee for the divine grace that meets our human needs. We thank Thee for that in which we dare put our complete confidence and trust. We thank Thee for the wonder of Thy love to which we can with deep assurance entrust our all.

Now gives us a conscious and living experience of Thy love and Thy grace and grant that the wonder of the great redemption may be a power by which we live daily. And may the ministry of healing accomplish through Jesus Christ become a great source of creative energy in our minds and in our hearts and in our conscience and in our wills and in our total being. Wilt Thou make of us worthy instruments of Thy peace and of Thy power and use us to serve Thee, to bring healing and help to the world in all of its places of need. We thank Thee for the privilege of assembling ourselves together and finding our faith reinforced by the presence of our friends in the kingdom. We rejoice in this congregation come together with single mind and single purpose to know Thee better and to receive more fully Thy blessings.

Now wilt Thou truly bless us. May Thy spirit rest upon Thy church and Thy people everywhere lest they attempt to bring healing to the world, themselves unhealed. May our prayers and our songs, our meditations, our thoughts, the resolves of our hearts but dimly perceived, the aspirations not yet defined, all be taken up in Thy gracious purpose and woven into a mighty pattern of good.

Wilt Thou especially and abundantly bless those who have particular pressures upon them, those whose needs are very acute, those who are sick, those who are in distress. Wilt Thou bless those to whom life wears a bleak aspect and whose hearts know the ache of loneliness and whose spirits are

lighted by a great joy. Wilt Thou bring the rch of Thy happiness into their hearts and to their minds.

Now we ask that Thou wilt take us up Thy gracious keeping and care, guide d direct us with Thy leading through this me of worship. Go with us our several ways d be with us the days of this week that e may be a constant pageant of triumph- t praise to Thee and a perpetual rejoicing Thy friendly and saving presence. For ese mercies we ask through Jesus Christ, r Saviour. — Amen.

III

Our Heavenly Father, we gather together is day with glad hearts, and spirits filled th praise and thanksgiving to Thee. Thou st filled our minds with Thy glory; Thou st lighted our way; Thou hast given us the ength that is needful to walk in the paths righteousness; Thou hast turned us out of e way of evil; Thou hast reclaimed us en we were helpless; Thou hast brought us a newness of life that we could not hieve for ourselves. So we turn to Thee th happy and grateful hearts.

On this very special day we would thank ee for our mothers and for the quality of ir spirit, for their love revealed in deeds service, for their strength of character hich has made this universe for us into a me, for their compassion that has follow- us all our days, for their understanding, at has brought out in us the best.

We ask that Thou wilt bless this time of orship as we honor motherhood, as we ink of the glory of the home when Thou t there. Grant that our own homes may ceive the touch of Thy Holy Spirit and e blessings of Thy presence. And grant at we may truly make Thee the head of ery house and find in Thy love the glory our lives.

Now we ask that Thou wilt bless this ngregation here assembled, for we have me from many homes and we all need Thy essing. Wilt Thou unite us by Thy Holy irit so that we are together in the bundle life with Thee. Wilt Thou honor the need each life, expressed or unexpressed, as e come to Thy presence. Grant us forgive- ss of those things which require forgive- ss. Grant us cleansing from those things hich are wrong and establish us in Thy uth; and above all, establish us in Thy love.

We thank Thee for the privileges that are rs this day, especially the privilege of nowing the Gospel. May this privilege of nowing the good news of Jesus Christ be read abroad all about the earth until the light that lights the mind and the glory that illumines the spirit may become the possession of everybody, everywhere.

Wilt Thou bless us throughout this time of worship. In all that we do may we acknowledge Thee, and may we worship in Thy spirit. And may the inspiration that comes to us this hour from Thee also become the dynamic of our life for the days that lie ahead. For we ask these mercies in Christ's name. — Amen.

IV

Our Heavenly Father, we come before Thee now with our prayers of praise and our prayers of penitence. We praise Thee for the wonder of Thy character, the glory of Thy love, the wonderful light that illumines our lives and gives to all of our days an invincible splendor, and to our nights an unshakeable hope. We praise Thee for the way Thou hast made Thy love known in Jesus Christ, who has claimed us, who has given us His gracious promises of life abundant and life eternal. For that glorious gift of salvation, we praise Thee.

And for the wonder, the thrill, the encouragement of the fellowship of our church, we praise Thee. Here we find faith fortified; here we find our spirits quickened. Here we find life made new because we worship Thee, together, and serve in Thy spirit.

And we bow before Thee in penitence because we know our weaknesses and our rebelliousness and our shortcomings; these we do confess to Thee, and ask for Thy forgiveness. Wilt Thou forgive us the things that we do which we ought not to do; may we cast them from our lives. Wilt Thou forgive us the things that we ought to do, and do not. Forgive us alike the sins of commission and omission, and grant that we may truly do the things that are to be done, and may turn from the things that are wrong, and walk in Thy way. And we ask that Thou wilt forgive us when we do the right thing in the wrong spirit; purge us from the sins of pride and self-esteem. May we walk in Thy spirit on the royal highway of love. May Thy compassion be seen in us.

And now this day we join with others who lift earnest prayers, for Thy help, for Thy wisdom and Thy guidance, in dealing with the problems that beset us. Especially this day we ask that Thou wilt grant to those who are in the great battle to control cancer, Thy leading and Thy light. And to those who are victims, wilt Thou grant Thy peace; and to all of us Thy compassion and Thy understanding, that we may love and help one another. We pray for this time of

worship, that all our spirits may be quickened and renewed, mind and heart and soul, that our wills may be strengthened for the right, that we may encourage one another in the Lord.

Let Thy blessing today be upon those who stand at the altar of the church to pledge their lives to Thee. May they feel that we are all welcoming them in our hearts as they come into this fellowship. May this be a day of joy and thanksgiving for all of us, that Thy kingdom is made stronger, that Thy cause moves forward. Bless this church in its worship, in its work, in its fellowship and service, and above all, in its spiritual life. May we live every day as in Thine eye. May we always be in the presence of our risen Saviour. And may our hearts be filled with joy because we know in whom we have believed, even Christ the Lord. Bless this prayer as we lift it in the name of our Saviour.

—Amen.

V

Thy reign, O Lord, is forever and ever, and to all eternity, and even to everlasting! We rejoice that Thou hast called us to be members of that kingdom that has no end, that Thou hast invited us to enter into that confidence which is thoroughly and securely grounded on Thy character of unchanging love and righteousness.

We come again into Thy presence this day that Thou wilt quicken and renew us in faith, that Thou wilt refresh our spirits in the things of Thy love and Thy righteousness and Thy truth, that Thou wilt give us the power that is sufficient for each day, the wisdom to make the right choice in each time of decision, the charity that will suffuse all of life with splendor. We ask that Thou wilt so remake and renew us in this time of worship that Thy spirit may truly reign within us and be seen in us, that we may become worthy ambassadors to this world of Thy eternal world.

We come into Thy presence with very deep humility, for we know that each one of us is unworthy to stand in Thy presence. We ask that Thou wilt accept us because of Thy grace, not because of any merit of our own, that Thou wilt listen to our prayers of penitence and forgive us our sins, that Thou wilt renew and strengthen us in all that is right and good in our lives.

Grant us the glory of that saving fellowship with Jesus Christ that can claim and reclaim us for Thee. We ask Thy blessing upon this fellowship. Grant to all of our people Thy peace, Thy power. May this be but a symbol of the spirit of fellowship that truly reigns in our hearts as we deal wi all people everywhere.

We pray for this Church and for t great Church of which it is a part. M Thy blessing be upon the General Confe ence. As they meet in Thy name, so m they act in Thy spirit. Wilt Thou be wi every cause that holds high the banner righteousness and right. And grant to T people everywhere Thy presence, so that o weakness may find its sufficiency in T strength, and we may truly do for Thee t work that is ours to be accomplished in th time. For these mercies we ask in Christ name. — Amen.

VI

Almighty and ever-living God, we con now into Thy presence that we may gi Thee praise from our hearts and minds a spirits, and with our whole being may r joice in Thy Kingship. We would seek o the secret of our peace, which we can ha only from Thee; for Thou art the King our lives and Thou alone dost have the rig to rule, and only as we find our rest in The can we find release from the restlessness the spirit. So let Thy blessing be upon us this hour of praise.

May it also be an hour when lives a changed, when hearts are lifted up, wh minds are quickened, when our wills a strengthened and made as strong and r silient as steel. Above all, teach us the s cret of Thy peace and grant us the sen of Thy loving companionship, so that wi all of life suffused by Thy love we m find the happiness that Thou hast in sto for us.

Now as we praise Thee, may Thy bles ing be upon our worship. As we make fir resolves for good, wilt Thou confirm o resolves. As we seek to reorient ourselv so that Thy will may truly be done in o lives, wilt Thou bless our decisions and ble our humility.

Now this day we would especially a Thy blessing upon the new mmebers cor ing into this Church, and deeper, wilt Th bless them as they come into Thy holy kin dom, acknowledging the Lordship and Ma esty of the Saviour, Jesus Christ, in the own lives. Bless the young people and tho of their families who this day pledge ther selves to Thee.

We thank Thee for the privilege of b ing together in this great congregation. M Thy spirit enter every heart and eve home; may Thy blessing be upon every li Help us to be loyal to that which we se today—the wonder and majesty of our Kin —and grant that we may faithfully foll

m, and never betray. May we go with
m every day and all the way, and may
s blessing be upon us in all our ways. We
these mercies in the name of Jesus
rist our Lord and King, and the Saviour
us all. Amen.

VII

Our Heavenly Father, we are gathered
ether here to give thanks unto Thy name,
praise Thee for Thy goodness. We re-
e that Thou hast called us together to
ome a congregation of those who love
rist and who know that they are loved
Him. We give thanks to Thee for the way
which Thy love hast followed us all of
days and in all of our ways, for the
dance and the leading of Thy light in
life. We would praise Thee for the
wer that Thou dost give us when we are
fronted with our own weakness and in-
ficiency. We thank Thee for the deliv-
nce that comes when we are unable to
iver ourselves from our problems, for
the wonderful workings of Thy grace
beyond our understanding, but not be-
nd our thanks.

Now we lift our prayer of praise to Thee,
d we thank Thee above all that Thou art
re with us, an ever-present God, our
end, our companion, our deliverer, our
viour, constantly building strength into
r character and giving vision to our minds
l righteous enthusiasm to our spirit. We
nk Thee that we can have fellowship
th Thee and with one another in Thy
me and in Thy spirit. For all the heart-
ng ways of Thy dealings with men we
deeply and humbly grateful. Wilt Thou
ly bless our fellowship together here and
y this be a time of inward strengthening
d outward rejoicing that we are members
Thy kingdom.

We would pray also for those who have
rticular needs and those who are in dis-
ss. Our prayers go out to all who are
k and who have all the problems that
tend the sickbed. May we share their lot
d may our prayers give them strength and
lp. We pray for those whose lives are
ming upon confusion and sometimes upon
ipwreck, Thou who canst pilot our lives
safe ways. Wilt Thou truly give Thy help,
idance, and strength to those who need
very much. We pray for those upon whom
e light has not shined with its tremen-
us and light-transforming splendor, that
eir eyes may be opened to see the glory
at is all about them. And grant that those
o have not learned to call upon Thee as
eir Friend and Saviour, through Jesus Christ, may yet experience the wonder of His transforming friendship that can make all things new.

For the wonder of Thy presence and above all for the glory of that great deed of love upon Calvary's Cross, now we give to Thee not only our thanks and our devotion, but ourselves, in humble commitment and consecration. Wilt Thou accept us by Thy grace and by Thy mercy. May Thy love be felt in us and be seen in what we are and in what we do. May Thy strength move through us that our lives may become channels of service and helpfulness and uplift in this world, and may this world be a better place because we have been in it, and have lived as members of Thy family. These mercies we lift to Thee in the blessed name of Christ, our Lord and our Redeemer, our Friend and our Saviour forever. Amen.

VIII

Almighty God, our Heavenly Father and the Father of our Lord, Jesus Christ, in whose name we pray, we gather together to ask Thy blessing and to praise Thee for Thy wonderful grace. We thank Thee for the light that can lead us into the way of truth and righteousness and peace because it comes from Thee. We praise Thee for the liberty of Spirit that is ours when we are released from the shackles of sin and spiritual ignorance by Thy truth. We thank Thee for the quality of life Thou dost create in us and which Thou dost release through us into the world as we live in faithfulness and loyalty to Jesus, our Saviour, who is the Way and the Truth and the Life.

Now may this hour be a very sacred hour in our lives because we open our hearts and faith to Thee. May Thy grace truly flood our experience. Wilt Thou grant to us the forgiveness that enables us to forget the things that are wrong and unworthy. Wilt Thou remind us of our great calling as persons meant for Jesus Christ. Wilt Thou quicken us in our devotions and establish us in all holy and right habits that because we have worshipped this day together Thy kingdom may be the stronger.

Let Thy blessing be upon all of us gathered here and grant to each one who comes into this fellowship a full measure of Thy grace suited to his needs. And wilt Thou fulfill the worthy aspirations of the soul. Wilt Thou purge our spirits from the distractions that keep us from the one thing needful.

We pray for those of our fellowship who are not able to be here. Wilt Thou bless all who are sick and those who know the mean-

ing of despondency and depression of spirit. Grant to them the touch of Thy spirit that can lift them up in strength and in hope and in joy. Grant that through the very fellowship of this church we may sustain one another in the spirit of love and understanding. Be with Thy people everywhere that Thy Church may march with sure and firm step and grant that its outreach may be continual, that others may be brought into the gladness of Thy kingdom all the while.

Let Thy blessing be upon the new mem bers who enter our church this day. Ma it ever be to us and to them a cause fo Thanksgiving to Thee that they have en tered into our fellowship.

Now bless this time of worship and a that is done in purpose and prayer her and grant that all may continue to the glor of Thy kingdom, for we ask it throug Jesus, our Redeemer. Amen.

EVERETT W. PALMER
FRANKLIN C. HUBBARD
DONALD SIMMS, JR.

How Does Christ Save Us?

EVERETT W. PALMER, First Methodist Church, Glendale, California

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved. John 3:16-17

"God so loved the world, that he gave his ly begotten Son—" If the New Testament d a headline, that would be it. Then still in ldface would follow this: "—that whoso- er believeth in him should not perish but ve everlasting life. For God sent not his n into the world to condemn the world; t that the world through him might be ved."

That is the Gospel in miniature, the ulti- ate essence of the Good News spoken to e world by Jesus Christ.

Do we believe this? If so, why? We call sus Christ Saviour. What do we mean?

In the Communion Service we read these ered and solemn words: "If any man sin e have an advocate with the Father, Jesus rist the righteous: and he is the propi- ation for our sins: and not for ours only, t also for the sins of the whole world . . . is is a faithful saying, and worthy of all ceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the orld to save sinners."

Then as we hold the bread and later the ne, a minister repeats words of which his s are not worthy. In an act of remem- ance we put ourselves about a table where is first friends had gathered for what ould be their last supper with Him, and e hear Him tell the meaning of His death the morrow: "This is my body, which is ven for you . . . This cup is the new cov- ant in my blood, which is shed for you, d for many, for the remission of sins . . ."

How can we believe it? Why is the Cross e supreme symbol for Christians? Why ould the execution of an innocent man by oman soldiers on a cross twenty centuries go in a faraway place have any relevance r us today, to say nothing of the pro- undly personal and social, intimate and perative significance implied in and by e ritual of Holy Communion?

How does Christ save us? No question robes more deeply. No question reveals ore completely the inadequacy of any reacher, especially this preacher. But, ough the truth is so big our tiny minds can embrace but a fragment of it, and though our speech falters and fails under the burden of telling the little we do know; though it is so vast it sweeps us to the threshold of Infinity and there sends us to our knees before grandeur unspeakable, mystery unfathomable, "lost in wonder, love and praise"; even so, a Christian must give such answer as he can. This he owes the world, himself, and his Saviour.

I

"How does Christ save us?" Let us begin by considering answers given by the early Christians. As they reflected upon what Jesus had said respecting His nature, mission, and death, and, also, as they reflected upon the experience of God and of new life which had come to them through Jesus, they arrived at a profound and startling conviction. They came to believe His death was not a tragic accident; not a maddening, insane quirk of fate; and, this above all, not a pitiful failure. They saw it as the climax of a purpose which had originated in the heart of God and as a choice freely made by His Son. They viewed it as the inevitable culmination of the mighty task to which Jesus Christ had given Himself; that is, the reconciliation of sinful men to a Holy God. Supremely, they understood it not as an occasion of defeat, but of ultimate triumph; not of victory by sin and death, but of victory over sin and death.

In their endeavor to interpret this experience and conviction to others they used such symbols and analogies as were available, those indigenous to the common life of their times, especially those suggested by Jewish beliefs and practices. Hence, from traditional Temple ceremonies they took the symbol of sacrifice. As the penitent sinner brought a lamb or a bullock to be slain by a priest upon the altar as atonement for his sins, so they said Christ offered Himself upon the Cross, a sacrifice slain as atonement for the sins of all mankind—"a full and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world." From the law courts they

took symbols of judgment and of penalty, of debt and of its payment or cancellation. Man as sinner, they said, is under judgment of death by a Holy God. Christ in His death takes this penalty upon Himself, thus saving man. Or, to use the other figure, sin is a debt putting us in frightful, inescapable bondage. By giving His life upon the Cross, Christ cancelled that debt, fulfilled every legal demand of violated moral law and benign justice, thus setting man free.

These and similar figures of speech we find throughout the New Testament, and where carried over in hymns and liturgy of the Church, they represent earnest and intelligent endeavor to interpret to the world of nineteen and twenty centuries ago the saving significance of Christ's death on the Cross.

Are these answers given by our fathers sufficient for us? Are the symbols and analogies they used adequate for our times? In all respect and gratitude for them, this yet needs to be said. Should we use these theories and symbols as a substitute for our own thinking? Should we fail to understand their origin and purpose, they become a hindrance rather than a help. They conceal a great and redemptive truth rather than reveal it, make it repulsive rather than appealing, confusing rather than convincing.

Hence, to answer the question, "How does Christ save us?" it is imperative for us to go beyond the theories and symbols of our fathers, venerated though they are, to the primary sources. We must deal first-hand with the same fundamentals of objective fact and personal experience from which they reasoned and spoke. And, as they used symbols and analogies indigenous to their times, likewise should we.

II

Let us now turn to such fundamentals and there ask the question. "How does Christ save us?"

First, with our fathers in the faith we answer, "Christ saves us through His revelation of God."

All creation reveals its Creator. In my study is a miniature flowerpot containing a cluster of daintily made artificial pansies. They were fashioned and given to me by a little girl of our Church School. Every time I look at that gift I am reminded of her happy, friendly face, of her sensitive spirit—itself a budding flower—opening to beauty, love, and faith. The created reveals its creator.

Even so, God is revealed among us. We see something of Him in the far-shining stars, the glittering sea, the everlasti hills; in the nobility of a Schweitzer, t dedicated life of an unknown Church Sch teacher, or in the loving care of a moth for her babe. But, of course, God stan better revealed in His supreme Creation, J sus Christ.

In Him we see all of God that hum flesh and spirit can hold. Indeed, in th sense we dare to say Jesus Christ, thou very man, was also very God; that in Hi "God was present, God was speaking, G was acting." And, as God is better reveal by His supreme creation, Jesus Christ, He is best revealed by supreme act of H supreme creation, namely the willingness Jesus Christ to die on the Cross for ma kind. In the love which sent Christ to t Cross we see the love of God for mankin or, to put it in stronger language, we s God in human flesh and spirit sufferi and dying for sinful man, for you and me

It is one thing to think of Jesus Chri merely as a great Prophet, a famous Teache an illustrious Example, an honored Hero, noble Martyr. He was all of that, of cours But this does not bend our knees before Cross.

It is quite another matter to believe th in Jesus Christ God entered our comm life; shared the worst that can befall u loved us to the uttermost even when we d serted, betrayed, hated, and killed Him; a that He did this so we might find our w from darkness to light, from death to lif To look upon the man Jesus Christ on t Cross and believe that He was Almighty G as well, that God took the nails for us, th gives the death of Christ significance, sa ing significance for any man.

Second, with our fathers in the faith v answer, Christ saves us not only as He r veals the nature of God, but also as He r veals the nature of sin.

As Leslie Weatherhead reminds us, "T nature of sin is such that it blinds us to i own nature." And he adds, "The punishme of sin is essentially the deterioration in cha acter — often unconscious — which follo sin, and which sin sets in motion." Sin first loathed, then condoned, then embrace Usually, the longer we practice a sin, t less we regard it as sin, the more reaso we find to justify it, even view it as virtu

The city or government official who a cepts bribes, the bank employee who embe zles, the youth who surrenders to lust, t woman who permits her tongue to becon a dagger, the man dishonest in business profane in conversation: in every case wh

was loathed, next was condoned, then raced.

man who had played big league base- once told me how he felt when first he ated the teaching of a Christian home played Sunday baseball. He said: "I been taught to revere Sunday as a Holy , to regard it as a trust from God for great things of the soul. In our home as set aside for quietness, for worship, books, music, and for the happy fellow- of church and home, for all that re- s, exalts, instructs, nurttures and re- ns the soul.

When first I went out to warm up for unday game and listened to the chatter roar of the crowd and the hucksters ng the sale of popcorn, hot dogs, and r. and saw in no face little or any ght of God, I felt so ashamed and guilty uld hardly handle the ball. But, you w, as weeks passed, the feeling went ay. I got so I hardly thought of Sunday being something special, except that the wd was bigger and noisier. I got so I n't feel guilty about it any more." Then, added, thoughtfully, "I guess that is the it is with most anything."

Whatever our family teaching or our con- nce may tell us about commercial sports Sunday, the fact remains, any violation the Ten Commandments or of Christian ue follows the same pattern. Always the re it is practiced the less it is regarded as , the more reasons we find to justify it, n view it as virtue. Thus sin makes us creature by building up walls to make immune to the probe of conscience and appeal of repentance.

III

Only something breaking in upon us, nething which shakes us awake and opens eyes to the sin that has enthralled and ssessed us, can bring deliverance. The er day a person told me that after years heavy drinking, he had stopped. "I haven't en a drink for twenty-one months," he d. I asked, "What prompted you to do s?" He answered quite simply, "I got the T's."

What the unspeakable anguish of delirium mens did for that alcoholic, the Cross of us Christ does in much larger measure every sinner, even you and me, anyone o dares look upon it and think!

As nothing known to man, the Cross strips ay all glittering tinsel, all excuses of acticality, all blindness of familiarity, ery camouflage, and makes us see sin for at it is: our most deceptive, destructive, cruel enemy. The Cross reminds us that every sin to which we are tempted nailed the pure Christ on the Cross—and even now crucifies Him afresh. We know that always everything good, pure, true, lovely, holy and joyous is crucified by sin. So the Cross is a battering ram that breaks through every barrier sin erects to show us our sins as they really are. And what we see is the strongest reason for repentance we can know.

Now come farther to see that since the Cross reveals supremely both the nature of God and the nature of sin, we can say with our fathers, Christ saves as He releases in our life the redemptive power of love.

God's problem was and is the same as that of any parent or teacher. He cannot compel goodness. He can only educe it. He cannot demand love. He can only invite it. He must leave man free to reject or accept, spurn or cherish. The answer God brings to His problem, even you and me, is love. He would awaken our love for Him by first loving us. And in the power of that love he would provide us with a weapon mighty enough to break the grip of evil, a dynamo great enough to launch and sustain us in the adventure of goodness.

Methodism's new TV series called "The Way" is now being released to television stations across America. The first film of the series is based upon the experience of a young minister serving a church in a rough city neighborhood. Though changes are made to conceal identity, many of us will be interested to know that it is based upon a true incident in the life of Bishop Donald H. Tippett. During the early years of his ministry he was serving the Church of All Nations in New York on the Lower East Side. It was a rough neighborhood and the church provided as best it could a seven-day week program, serving many needs of the people there. Especially, the church majored in youth activities. Among other things it had a swimming pool.

About eight o'clock one Saturday night three young hoodlums stopped in, wanting to establish a witness for their whereabouts. They planned a holdup in upstate New York that night and wished it known that they had been in church elsewhere .They went to his office, in his presence staged an argument about what time it was, and got him to verify it. About then the switchboard buzzed in an adjoining office. Since no one was on duty, Tippett slipped out to answer it. The hoodlums, not knowing why he had left the room and finding him at a telephone, thought he was suspicious and was

calling the police. Whereupon they set upon him with brass knuckles filed to sharp points, beating him brutally. When they finished he was an unconscious, bloody heap, one eye gouged out. Thinking he was dead, and trying to dispose of his body, they doubled him up and jammed him in behind a hall radiator. Then they fled.

Some time later, Gertrude Ederle, the channel swimmer, who was there conducting a course in lifesaving, came out of the pool to check on the time. The hall lights were out and as she walked in bare feet down the marble corridor she chanced to step in a pool of warm blood and slipped. Startled, she screamed. A custodian came and turned on the lights, so he was found.

The lads went upstate according to their plan, staged the holdup, and in the process, killed a night watchman. They were apprehended. The one who committed the murder was sent to Sing Sing and later executed.

In the meantime, Bishop Tippett had been in the hospital hovering between life and death. One eye had been totally destroyed and there was question as to whether the other could be spared. While there, he had several reasons to think of One who once had gone to a Cross. Especially, he thought about the power of redemptive love. As soon as he could, he sent a message to the court asking that the other two lads be paroled under his supervision.

He treated them like sons. One failed to respond, but the other made good. He attended college and graduated. Then, later the Bishop helped him attend a medical school. For the lad had said, "I want t become a doctor, an eye surgeon."

Somewhere in America, on the staff of hospital, is a distinguished surgeon, an ey specialist. I wonder if there is ever a tim when he begins an operation that he doe not remember a Saturday night on the Lowe East Side in New York and a young minis ter by the name of Tippett.

Of all things in heaven and on earth, wha is so mighty for the salvation of man a love! And where is its power so mighty a when sinful man sees it in the face of God such a God as Jesus Christ reveals from Cross.

"How does Christ save us?" No questio probes more deeply. No question reveal more completely the inadequacy of thi preacher. But though the truth is so big ou little minds can embrace but a fragment o it, and though our speech falters and fail under the burden of telling the small frag ment we do know, even so we must answe as best we can.

With our fathers in the faith we can sa that Jesus Christ saves us as on the Cros He shows us the heart of God; on the Cros He shows us the full worst of evil; and b the Cross he releases into our poor, frus trated, twisted souls the redeeming, recreat ing power of love. And this is enough t save us, even unto the uttermost.

The Glory Road

FRANKLIN C. HUBBARD, Methodist Church, Seneca, Illinois

Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come. II Cor. 5:17.

I

My Christian experience started when I was about ten years of age. I can recall it because it contains some sweet yet bitter memories.

I suppose I was an average boy—not so bad but what I could have been worse and not so good but what I could have been better. Like most boys, I was not too impressed with Sunday school. But at the age of ten or thereabouts I suddenly decided to become a minister. I well remember going up to the attic where, lying on the dusty floor with paper and pencil, I laboriously composed a prayer. I do not recall the words, but, to me at least, it was a beautiful prayer. After writing it I took it to a person I thought would appreciate it and encourage me in my intention. He was a fine Christian gentleman, but he possessed little under standing of children. He knew me quite wel knew of the pranks I played; of the window accidently broken; of the black eyes an bloody noses given and received. I suppos he was somewhat skeptical of the sort o minister I would become. After he read th prayer he crumbled the paper in his han and threw it to the floor. Then he began t lecture me on my past misdeeds. I do no remember what he said, but I recall tha tears rolled down my cheeks—not tears o remorse for past misdeeds but tears o wounded pride and disappointment.

I picked up the crumpled paper and ra all the way home. In the attic I threw my self on the floor and wept bitterly. Needless to say, I began to skip Sunday school a every opportunity. My mother pleaded wit

and more than once my father whipped for refusing to attend. There is a moral that story to which I shall return.

As a mere youth, I entered the Navy dur- World War I. While serving on the S.S. Birmingham, I met a Mr. Cassaboom. was the blacksmith aboard and a con- rated Christian. Three times a day this n knelt by his anvil and prayed. He held rship services every Sunday and several ies he spoke to me about my soul, but I ghed and told him I was no worse or ter than the next fellow and I saw no d for religion. The life of a devout ristian can and does influence others to gher things, and gradually Cassaboom won over to the Christian life.

II

I came out of the Navy when I was nine- n and I had, or thought I had, definitely en my life to Christ. I returned home and h certain recommendations received my ense to preach. I was given a small church a mining town. I worked in a steel-mill ing the day and went down on week-ends preach. The people in this village were stly of foreign birth. They were very or people. The wages they received were rely enough to keep body and soul togeth- This was during the days of prohibition. In that village was a place called the ed Barn." If one wanted to indulge in sin its vilest form that was the place to go. pay-day many of the miners would take at little wages they received and spend em at the "Red Barn." I understand now at they sought some relief from the dull utine of their life. Discouraged, without ch hope of ever raising themselves, they ank and gambled and indulged in other rms of sin. They squandered what little ney they made while their wives and ldren suffered neglect.

After some little persuasion from the ves of these men I went to the manager the "Red Barn" and asked him to close e place on Sunday and not to sell liquor certain men. I pleaded with him, calling ention to the needs of the wives and ldren. He listened respectfully enough d then told me he was not the owner but rely managed the place on a commission sis. I asked him for the name of the owner d he gave it to me. I didn't believe him first because he named a person who was member and trustee of the church that anted me my license to preach. He was an fluencial man, a respected citizen and he d power.

I went to this man. We knew each other and I was invited into his palatial home. After a few polite words I told him of the purpose of my visit. I ventured that he was not aware of the conditions; I was most apologetic about bringing the matter to his attention and yet I was most firm in saying that I expected him, as a Christian, to close the place, not only on Sunday but permanently.

He listened until I was through and then said: "You are preaching at that church because I said you could. I own that church lock, stock and barrel. You tend to your preaching and leave the Red Barn alone or you won't be preaching long." I did not take the man's advice as I will not take the advise of anyone in the wrong. Nor am I easily scared with threats of reprisals. I was convinced I was in the right. I told the man he was wrong and asked him to reconsider his stand, but it was of no use. I went to our minister and some of his friends and asked them to try to convince him of the wrong he was doing, but they told me I had better not interfere. Some accused me of being a fanatic; others said that I should reconsider my call-to-preach. Everyone discourage my taking any direct action. These people, good people according to their idea of goodness, advised me to compromise with evil. Christians know there can be no compromising with sin. There is a definite line beyond which a Christian cannot, must not go.

I came to that line and a decision was made. I exposed the man and his Red Barn publicly. A minister of the Word cannot hold himself cheaply. There is no contradiction between a noble humility and a courageous self-respect. We must pay for the right to respect ourselves. With dignified sincerity we must face dangers and the duties of our calling. Of course, it is entirely possible to stand one's ground in a wrong cause. Consider our own times. It is almost fatally easy to dig in behind positions of pride, power and fancied righteousness and make the maintenance of one's own authority more important than that which is right. But no man is ever lost who, standing where love, duty and the lines of far horizons meet, challenges the councils of expediency, fear and deceit. Instead he finds himself. I made a decision, and I lost my license to preach.

I have said there is a moral in these stories. Here it is. We are touching our fellow-beings on all sides. Some may be young and immature but, nevertheless, they are effected for good or evil by what we are, by what we do and say, even sometimes by what we feel and think. I believe that if

there is an unforgivable sin it is to cause one of our fellow human to lose faith in his fellow-man. "No man liveth unto himself, and no man dieth to himself." Others are strengthened or weakened by our unconscious deeds and influences.

III

I earnestly desired to be of help to my fellowman. With my license to preach gone, I ceased to have any interest in the Church. We won't dwell on the foolishness of that action. It was foolish. I looked around to find something by which I could be of that help. Finally I decided to turn to medicine, pathology in particular, as a profession. I enrolled in a small mid-western college. I had very little money and it was necessary for me to work to earn my way. My wife worked by my side. Three children were born in too close succession and the work required to keep ends meeting proved too much of a strain on her.

I well remember what the minister said at the funeral: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord." Those words held no comfort for me because I had long since torn out any belief in the Lord. "What foolishness," I thought, "what down-right idiocy!" As the minister droned on, "Son of man, behold I have taken away the desire of thine eyes at a stroke, yet neither shalt thou weep, nor let the tears run down." What utter nonsense this! What kind of a God was this who would take away my beloved and innocuously remark, "Thou shalt not weep!" To what depths of absurdity one must sink in order to believe in a God of that sort.

I placed the children in the hands of a friend and for three years I kept on a perpetual drunk. The only time I was sober was when I woke up in the mornings and then only long enough to grab a bottle and drink myself into oblivion. Finally, my sense of responsibility to my children became obvious, and I stopped drinking as quickly as I began. No, it wasn't that simple, but within three months I had no desire to drink.

I entered a profitable business and became successful in a modest way. I was not happy. Something was missing and I was plagued with the thought, "What is life all about?" I provided a good home and education for the children, and the world seemed a little rosier once more. I came to think that success was what the world demanded of a man. The terrors and memories of the past had become more or less an unhappy nightmare, something so very unreal that it couldn't happen again. I was established and sittin on top of the world I had built around my self. Then the foundations began to crumbl again.

IV

Came World War II. My sons enlisted i the Navy and my daughter in the Arm Nurse Corps. One day the telegram cam announcing the death of the boys. I attempt ed to enlist in the Navy, but I was rejected Then I enlisted in the Army. While servin at Fort Jay, I received a message that m daughter had "died of exposures" in Eng land. There was no sniveling now, no whim pering because an unkind fate had graspe me by the throat. Here was something could handle personally. An unrestraine hatred took over my life. I'd kill as man times again, ten times, a hundred times over The suffering I might have felt was quench ed by the knowledge that I had it in m power to strike back. I'd kill, kill, kill—unti the last drop of blood was washed away i the blood of others. The sufferings other had caused me would be recompensed by th suffering I would inflict on others and would see to it personally. I demanded an received an immediate transfer to comba duty.

I went in at Cassablanca, on to Salerno Naples and up Highway 6 in Italy. It happen ed just about fifteen miles south of Cassino We had moved into an area some two o three weeks before and had dug in for long stay. The engineers had cleared th area and parties had been back and fortl over the road. On this particular day I wa sent out with nine other men to haul in som broken equipment. I was driving. My truc struck a land-mine. The boy in the cab be side me lost both his legs. The men in th body of the truck were picked up in pieces I woke up in the 45th General Hospital i Naples. My left side was paralyzed.

In my ward was a lad who I believe belonged to one of the Pentecostal groups He kept bothering me about religion. On day he came over to my bed and handed m a New Testament. He said that I might fin God in it. "God be damned," I shouted a him. "I suppose God will bring life back i this side of mine." "He's done greater thing than that," the boy replied. "He's saved th souls of men like you."

I threw the New Testament from me. I struck the post of the next bed and droppe to the floor while I let all fury loose on th boy. He walked from me without a word After I had calmed down a bit, I was some what ashamed of myself. I rolled on m

e and with the aid of a crutch I worked
Testament to where I could pick it up.
t wanting the other patients to see what
ad done, I stuck it under my pillow.

V

Mine was not a sudden conversion. During
years I had forgotten most of what I
learned in Sunday school, and I hadn't
en inside a church for more than twenty
ars. The faith I possess today came only
er months of reading and thinking. Final-
came the realization, a realization that had
doubt laid dorment for years but now
oke through in its real splendor that the
riptures are not mere suppositions or
erstitions but splendid truths. Yet there
mained the question, "What is life all
out?"

Suddenly I realized that the principle
aging of my life had been for an assurance
t there are some answers to life and that
re is some meaning. I had been plagued
th a desire for answers. I wanted answers
t would give purpose to the struggles
d sacrifices. Gradually the answers were
ven. I can best express them in the words
Dr. Paul Scherer:

"The Way to Happiness is Purity.
The Way to Honor is Humility.
The Way to Power is Love.
The Way to Peace is Faith.
The Way to Greatness is Service."

I suddenly realized that through the years
had been rebelling against these things.
mething clicked in my brain that shook
like an explosion. To say that I saw the
ght is a poor description of the mental
pture that only a convert can know. The
w Light seemed to pour in from all direc-
ns. The whole universe fell into a pattern
e stray pieces of a jig-saw puzzle. There
now an answer to every question that had
agued me for years. Nothing can disturb
y inner peace and serenity except the oc-
sional fear of losing faith again—losing
ereby that which alone makes life worth
ing and falling back into outer and utter
rkness.

Paul said: "If any man be in Christ Jesus,
is a new creation?"

Well, that's it, isn't it! It is so gloriously true. Yet the odd thing is that so few people have really realized this truth.

Let's get back to that boy, that youth, yes, even the older man. I said earlier that we touch our fellow being on all sides. It may be a lad of ten years who has a little spiritual stirring in his soul, or maybe a youth of nineteen ready to dedicate his life, or even a man in his forties searching for life's answers.

As my earlier disappointments came through alley-me, my final decision came through a layman whose life was Christ-centered. I shall never forget Walter Casey. I had just been discharged from service and went to South Bend, Indiana, to complete a novel. Since thinking on the matter of Christianity, I formed the habit of attending worship on Sunday. Somehow, that particular Sunday, I wandered to St. Paul Methodist Church. I was still in uniform. As I was leaving the Church, I heard someone call, "Hey, soldier, where do you think you're going?" I turned to face a man who smiled and offered an outstretched hand. I explained that I was going uptown for dinner and then to my room.

"Oh, no, you're not!" Casey said. "You're going to have dinner with us and I want you to meet our minister."

I met Dr. Robert M. Selle. Space will not permit me to give the details, but lovingly and patiently Dr. Selle guided me back to the ministry. I received another license to preach. I did not intend to make the ministry a life—what remains of it—vocation. I was sent to preach for "five weeks" at a church in Indiana. That five weeks is ten years ago. I am now an ordained Elder. I have regained the use of my paralyzed side.

Oh, yes, the novel was never completed, for I realized I could never complete it and remain a Christian. I had a contract with the publishing firm and it cost me over seven thousand dollars to settle the matter out of court. It's going to cost you, if you are a Christian and you travel on Faith—not always knowing the answers but assured that they are there. And "I thank Christ Jesus, who hath enabled me, for that he counted me faithful, putting me into the ministry."

The Divine Triangle

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And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive. Matthew 21:22

Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Hebrews 11:1

Father, all things are possible unto thee; take away this cup from me: nevertheless not what I will, but what thou wilt. Mark 14:36

"When people's cars get old and worn, and then begin to toddle, they go somewhere and trade them in, and get the latest model. Now I have very often thought that when my joints get achy, and when my hair has all turned grey and knees are rather shaky; and when the onward march of time has left me rather feeble, how nice 'twould be, when feet give out, or we have damaged livers, if we could go and buy new parts just like we do for flivers. And when my form is bent with age and gets to looking shoddy, how nice 'twould be to trade it in and get a brand new body!"

We suddenly get serious as we turn from this anonymous bit of poetic prose to one of our texts, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive."

These two contrary thoughts illustrate exactly the dilemna we face in prayers for healing.

I

Nearly all of us, in one way or another, believe in divine healing. We have seen persons who were seemingly at the point of death, where medical science has said, "There is no hope," and where family and loved ones have resigned themselves to bereavement. Then "something" happened. The person, because of the wonderful recuperative powers of the body, or because of prayer, or because of the direct touch of God's hand, regained health. We have seen it happen, but we cannot explain it. Sometimes it occurs under the most baffling circumstances. Sometimes we say, "It's a miracle!"

Here, then, is the question: Can persons be healed by prayer? Or to put it in a different way: Can the healing power of God be brought to bear in a specific situation by the prayer of a person or a group of persons?

The instances of divine healing in the New Testament are too numerous to mention. Jesus, his disciples, and the early apostles of the church practiced it. Nearly always this healing was possible only through the faith of the one healed. The general rule in the New Testament is that the sick persons had to have faith. There are, however, important exceptions. The most obvious example of a miracle where in the recipient's faith was not a factor is the raising of Lazarus. The man who was let down through the roof to Jesus was healed not because of his own faith, but because of the faith of those who brought him. The daughter of Jairus was raised from the dead not because of her faith, but because of her father's. Jesus could do no mighty works in his own country because of their unbelief but, in spite of this lack of faith, "he laid his hands on a few sick folk, and healed them." Sometimes, then, Jesus healed without faith being obviously present. But, where Jesus found faith, he could and did heal. This is an obvious teaching of the Gospels.

II

With all these facts in mind, what general or specific pattern can we accept for today in faith healing, or in prayers for healing?

There are many who say that faith healing is an absolute and dependable action of God and that where there is faith, and where it is "asked in his name" there will be healing. There is, without doubt, much good being done today in this area of Christian practice. I, for one, do not doubt that God has moved through faith and prayer to heal and that he can heal both body and spirit.

One of the best known examples of faith healing today is found in the ministry of Oral Roberts. This, of course, is not the only activity of God in this realm, and I bring it to mind simply because many are familiar with it. "With God all things are possible" and there seems to be no doubt that persons have been healed by God through his ministry. It seems to me that he would have, by now, been exposed as a fraud if some had not received direct relief from their ailments, both real and imaginary. Brother Roberts admits, of course, that not all for whom he prays the "prayer of healing" are benefited physically. In these situations I always have the direct impression that those who are healed are not made whole because they have insufficient faith or have impro-

faith. These are always admonished to
tinue to pray, and here I am impressed
h the idea that God will soon or ultimate-
ct.
oes this mean that if we ask God long
ugh, or pray often enough, or have faith
ugh that we will *always* be healed? Does
nean that those who are *not* healed have
faith? Does it mean that they are not
ying properly, or that they are not pray-
"in Jesus' name?" Does it mean, after
that God *is* a respecter of persons—that
n some he bestows his divine favors,
le withholding them from others? How
gerous is it to the faith of a person to
om direct healing does not come?

III

o the sincere, seeking Christian, who
ld better understand God's activity in
ling, there are, indeed, some serious ques-
ns: "How far can we go in expecting to
healed?" "Exactly what did our Lord
an when he said that our prayers in his
me would be answered?"
ome of these questions arise directly from
New Testament itself. If faith and prop-
prayer is the answer to a sound body and
ng life, why was Stephen stoned? Why
all the disciples, except one, meet a
ent death? Why, when Paul prayed three
es to be livered from the "thorn in the
h," did God not answer his prayer?
ust as some of these perplexing questions
e directly from the New Testament, so
o do they arise in life. "Why," we ask,
e some of the dearest saints sometimes
se who suffer most?" Here is a dear old
n, precious in the eyes of God and strong
faith, who prays that one of his loved
s might be spared the agony of a long
lingering illness. Why is that loved one
healed, or taken immediately from life
t he will suffer no longer? Here is a
ntly woman, sweet of mind and heart,
rare indeed in the quality of her life-
e faith. She prays. Among her prayers
those in which she asks that she may
ve improved hearing so that while she
es she will not be helpless and an undue
den on her children and loved ones. Why
the prayer not answered in a direct and
vious way?

IV

Now let us begin to fit the pieces of this
mon into something positive, and, I trust,
pful. Following are the factors I believe
must consider if we are to find an an-
er.
If we are to discover the relationship of prayer to faith, we must find how our prayers react upon and are dependent upon our faith. And, in addition, we must discover how our faith should relate itself to those matters for which we pray. *The condition and strength of our faith has much to do with what we pray for, and the kind of answers we expect from our prayers has a very obvious bearing upon the condition of our faith.*

First of all, we must remember that prayer does not exist in a vacuum. It does not exist by itself, of itself, or within itself. Between prayer and the other vital forces of the Christian faith there is a definite interrelatedness. Prayer is one of the important aspects of Christianity, but it is not the only one. Prayer has a direct relationship with all things in the Christian life. One of the things to which it is related is faith, and who will deny its vital dependence upon the will of God?

Remember the nobleman from Capernaum to whom Jesus remarked, "Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe?" Do we make our faith depend on outward acts, and expect our prayers to bring forth these acts so that we might have faith? Does God have to move miraculously in the physical before we will believe in the spiritual? Is our faith to be shattered, and are we to feel our prayers useless if the physical sign and wonder is not forthcoming? Will we be tempted to forget or neglect the greatest miracle of all—the healing of a sinful soul—while we wait, sometimes in vain, for the miracle of physical healing? Is faith, then, "the substance of things known, and the evidence of things seen?" Are we justified by faith or by signs and wonders? Do we walk by faith and not by sight? Are we saved by grace through faith, or are we saved by grace through signs and wonders?

The relationship of prayer and faith to God's will is also of extreme importance. This is the Divine Triangle: *prayer, faith, God's will.*

It is plain in scripture, and obvious to us all, that man's days on earth are numbered. That is, man is not to live forever on this earth. Robert Browning, in "Rabbi Ben Ezra," says, "The best is yet to be, the last of life for which the first was made." The Christian can interpret this deeply and say that this life is made for the life to come. We say that "the best is yet to be" and that this "best" will be found in eternal life with God. Since our hope is not found in this life but in the one to come, are our prayers and our faith to be bound by the earth and earthly things? Must we not cut them loose

from earthly and bodily fetters and let them soar in heavenly places?

Next, we must constantly remind ourselves that God is interested primarily in the spirit and only secondarily in the body. His purpose in creation, in his love, and in his sending his only Begotten Son, is not the bodies of men, but their souls! God, being wrapped up as he is in the salvation of the spirit, will not act in a way that would bring doubt or confusion to men, or cause them to wonder about his purpose.

Would the icy fingers of doubt grip the heart of a man who once was miraculously healed and the next time was not? If the Christian faith would always bring healing for our bodies, why would we go to church? Why would we believe the Gospel? Why would we have faith in God? For physical reasons, or spiritual? Thus we can say with all confidence that God will not intervene to heal the body unless in his divine knowledge he is certain that that act of healing will be an instrument for spiritual salvation. He can and will act in the physical only when such action will bring faith which leads to the salvation of the eternal soul. He cannot and will not act when such action will bring faith that can find its meaning only in the physical.

V

As always, however, we find the answer to our quest in the words and actions of the Man of Galilee. Toward the end of his earthly ministry, our Lord "steadfastly set his face toward Jerusalem." He went with certain knowledge that suffering, persecution and the death of the cross awaited him there. He knew that there he would find both his shame and his glory. He knew that there his disciples would betray him, and one by one deny and desert him. He dreaded all these things, and his soul was "sorrowful even unto death." In the midst of the trials that were his, and with knowledge of those things that were to come, he prayed, "Let this cup pass from me." Jesus, being "the Word become flesh and dwelling among us" and being "such as we are yet without sin" prayed that the present and approaching agonies would be spared him. But was it God's purpose to spare him? God did not bring upon him his sufferings, but could he spare Jesus and in doing so bring to complete fruition his plans for the salvation of mankind? Was God to remove the physical pain, and in doing so jeopardize his spiritual purpose? Our Lord answered his own prayer with his next words: "Nevertheless, not what I will but what thou wilt."

May we then, following the example of the Christ, in the midst of pain and suffering be able to lift our eyes above the blinding mists of this world's needs, and aims, and purposes. May we, in utter trust and complete confidence, be always able to pray, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."